

ISLAM

Solid structures need strong foundations

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

When Vikas Minar, the tallest modern building of Delhi was completed, the newspapers reported that “the city’s twenty-one-storey building is ready.” The attention of the reader was thus focused on the twenty-first storey, although it was only after years of foundation-laying, and floor-by-floor additions to the building that it was possible for the topmost storey to be built. This is the ‘inverted pyramid’ style of modern reporting, which offers the most eye-catching piece of information first, in order to rivet the attention of readers. It takes no account of the normal progress of work, which would have a clearly distinguishable beginning, middle and end.

This has become such a common journalistic technique, that often the reality of the situation is lost sight of. After all, it is always a certain degree of sensationalism which sells a newspaper, and who, on the editorial staff, cares if the public receives a lopsided view of what is actually happening, provided the circulation goes on increasing.

The ‘inverted pyramid’ is an accepted part of news presentation, but, because it is resorted to by the media that does not mean that we should allow ourselves to slip into accepting it as a formula to be applied to the destiny of a whole people. If society is to be properly built, we cannot begin at the top floor. Just as a tree stands above the ground because it has strong foundations underneath, a good society can be formed only when adequate groundwork has been done. We must begin at the foundations and work our way painstakingly upward. The makers of promises are wont to make fine speeches about the top floor, but can anyone put the roof on a building before even the first foundation stone has been laid? True creativity has to begin at the base. Solid construction must stand on solid foundations.